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SUBJECT: AN ANALYSIS OF THE 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTION

BEGIN SUMMARY. THE 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTION REPRESENTS
A RETURN TO NORMALCY AFTER THE INTERLUDE CREATED BY THE
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1972 "WILLY BRANDT WAHL." THE CONSERVATIVE TREND IN

EVIDENCE IN THE LAENDER ELECTIONS SINCE 1972 WAS CONFIRMED ON OCTOBER 3. WELL AWARE OF THE TREND SCHMIDT REMINDED THE SPD PRESIDUM IN AN ELECTION POST-MORTEM MEETING THAT 56.5 PERCENT OF THE WEST GERMANS CAST THEIR BALLOTS FOR PARTIES TO THE RIGHT OF THE SPD. MORE THAN EVER THE NORTH-SOUTH REGIONAL DIFFERENCES WERE REFLECTED IN VOTER PREFERENCE -- WITH THE CDU/CSU DOING THE BEST IN THE HEAVILY CATHOLIC SOUTH AND THE SPD MINIMIZING ITS LOSSES IN THE PROTESTANT NORTH.

CLEARLY, THE TWO CANDIDATES WERE THE BEST CHOICE TO REPRESENT THEIR RESPECTIVE PARTIES IN THE ELECTION -- WITHOUT SCHMIDT THE COALITION WOULD NOT HAVE SURVIVED, AND IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY UNION CANDIDATE OTHER THAN KOHL COULD HAVE HELD ONTO THE LOYAL CDU VOTE WHILE APPEALING TO THE INDEPENDENTS. THE LIBERAL PERFORMANCE, DISAPPOINTING WHEN COMPARED WITH EXPECTATIONS, WAS NOT ALL THAT BAD (E.G., BETTER THAN IN 1953, 1957, 1965, AND 1969). THE DIFFICULTY IN ANY SINGLE PARTY REACHING THE 50 PERCENT MARK WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE THAT A FUTURE CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT WILL REQUIRE THE FDP TO CHANGE COALITION PARTNERS. STRAUSS ARGUES THAT A NATION-WIDE CSU TOGETHER WITH THE CDU WOULD OBTAIN A MAJORITY, BUT CDU POLITICIANS DISAGREE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE RESULTS OF THE OCTOBER 3, 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTION BASED ON THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT STATISTICS (THE FINAL GOVERNMENT STATISTICS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN SOME WEEKS) WERE:

NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS	41,956,768
NUMBER OF VALID BALLOTS CAST	37,824,048
PERCENTAGE OF VOTERS WHO CAST BALLOTS ..	91.0 PERCENT
SPD	16,098,632 (42.6 PERCENT) 213 SEATS
CDU/CSU	18,396,794 (48.6 PERCENT) 244 SEATS
FDP	2,995,160 (7.9 PERCENT) 39 SEATS
DKP	118,483 (0.3 PERCENT)
KPD	22,801 (0.1 PERCENT)
NPD	122,428 (0.3 PERCENT)
OTHER	-- (0.2 PERCENT)

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2. THE 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTION REPRESENTED A RETURN TO THE TRADITIONAL VOTING PATTERNS WHICH WERE DISTORTED BY THE SPECIAL 1972 ELECTION. MANY VOTERS WHO SUPPORTED WILLY BRANDT IN 1972 RETURNED TO THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC FOLD. THIS TREND BEGAN WITH THE LANDTAG ELECTIONS SINCE 1972. HOWEVER, THE TRADITIONAL PARTY VOTERS -- BE THEY SPD OR CDU - REMAINED LOYAL TO THEIR

PARTIES IN 1976. BOTH MAJOR ADVERSARIES FULLY MOBILIZED THEIR MEMBERS AND SYMPATHIZERS. ALTHOUGH PUNDITS WERE CRITICAL OF THE CAMPAIGN BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF SUBSTANTIVE DEBATE, THE EMOTIONS GENERATED BY THE CONFRONTATION ("FREIHEIT STATT SOZIALISMUS") RESULTED IN EXTREMELY HIGH VOTER PARTICIPATION.

3. REGIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES AND THE RESULTING POLITICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH GERMANY WERE KEY FACTORS IN THE ELECTION OUTCOME. CLEARLY, THE CDU/CSU DID BETTER IN THE SOUTHERN HALF OF GERMANY AND THE SPD DID BETTER (OR AT LEAST DID NOT SUFFER SUCH GREAT LOSSES) IN THE NORTHERN HALF OF THE FRG. THIS IS

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PARTLY DUE TO THE RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF THE FRG. THE
CATHOLIC POPULATION IS MOST HEAVILY CONCENTRATED IN THE
SOUTHERN HALF OF THE COUNTRY.

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4. A COMPARISON OF THE CDU/CSU VOTE IN 1976 WITH 1972
AND 1969 ILLUSTRATES THE NORTH-SOUTH SPLIT. (NOTE:
THIS SCHEMATIC IS NOT PERFECT BECAUSE THE SAARLAND
WHICH IS GEOGRAPHICALLY IN THE SOUTHERN HALF OF THE FRG
BY VIRTUE OF HISTORY AND PROXIMITY TO FRANCE DOES NOT
FULLY SHARE THE CULTURAL AND POLITICAL CHARACTERISTICS
OF THE OTHER SOUTHERN LAENDER).

1976/69 1976/72

HESSE	# 6.4	# 4.5
BAVARIA	# 5.6	# 4.9
BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG	# 2.6	# 3.5
RHINELAND-PALATINATE	# 2.1	# 4.0
HAMBURG	# 1.9	# 2.6
NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA	# 0.9	# 3.5
LOWER SAXONY	# 0.5	# 3.0
BREMEN	# 0.2	# 2.9
SAARLAND	# 0.1	# 2.8
SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN	- 2.1	# 2.1

5. SOME OF THE KEY VARIABLES IN FRG VOTING BEHAVIOR IN
1976 WERE RELIGION, SOCIAL STATUS, AGE AND SEX.

-- RELIGION: THE CDU/CSU DID BEST IN CITIES WITH LARGE
CATHOLIC POPULATIONS (A GAIN OF 4.8 PERCENT OVER
1972) AND IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WITH LARGE CATHOLIC
POPULATIONS (# 3.7 PERCENT). IN CITIES WITH A SMALL
NUMBER OF CATHOLICS THE GAIN WAS 3.2 PERCENT AND IN
THE NON-CATHOLIC COUNTRYSIDE # 2.8 PERCENT.

-- SOCIAL STATUS: ALL THREE PARTIES HELD ONTO THEIR
CORE VOTERS. THE SPD MAINTAINED THE LOYALTY OF
ORGANIZED WORKERS (E.G., IN THE RUHR). THE FDP CON-
TINUED TO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF TECHNOCRATS. IN THE
CASE OF UNION PARTIES' VOTERS, CATHOLIC VOTERS RE-
MAINED LOYAL.

-- AGE: AMONG FIRST-TIME VOTERS (THOSE BETWEEN 18-21) THE CDU/CSU MADE SIGNIFICANT GAINS. THIS WOULD SEEM TO REFLECT THE CONSERVATIVE WAVE AMONG YOUNGER VOTERS AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE INROADS OF THE JUNGE UNION IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS. HOWEVER, THE MAJORITY OF THE 21-25 AGE GROUP VOTERS ONCE AGAIN SUPPORTED THE SPD.

-- SEX: THE PARTY CHOICE OF MARRIED WOMEN VOTERS WAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NO DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF MARRIED MEN. HOWEVER, OLDER WOMEN LIVING ALONE VOTED OVERWHELMINGLY FOR THE CDU/CSU. OLDER MEN LIVING ALONE, ON THE OTHER HAND, TENDED TO SUPPORT THE SPD.

6. ONCE AGAIN THE SPLINTER PARTIES, BE THEY OF THE RIGHT OR THE LEFT, HELD LITTLE ATTRACTION FOR THE GERMAN VOTERS. THE DEMISE OF THE RIGHT-WING NPD WHICH RECEIVED 4.3 PERCENT IN 1969 IS PARTLY THE REASON THE SPD, WHICH RECEIVED ONLY 0.1 PERCENT LESS VOTES THAN IN 1969, RECEIVED FOUR LESS SEATS (I.E., IN 1976 THERE WAS LESS THAN ONE PERCENT SPLINTER VOTE TO REAPPORTION AMONG THE LARGE PARTIES).

7. FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS' VITRIOLIC REMARKS ABOUT THE POOR PERFORMANCE OF THE "NORTHERNERS" IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THE MORNING ON OCTOBER 4 CAN BE DISMISSED AS THE PRODUCT OF BITTERNESS AND FRUSTRATION BECAUSE THE UNION PARTIES CAME SO CLOSE BUT DID NOT QUITE ACHIEVE THE MAJORITY NECESSARY TO TAKE OVER THE REINS OF GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, HIS CRITICISM OF THE KEY NORTH GERMAN CDU POLITICIANS IS JUSTIFIED. IT WAS COMMON KNOWLEDGE BEFORE ELECTION DAY THAT STOLTENBERG AND FRIENDS WERE RUNNING A LACKLUSTER CAMPAIGN IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN. ONE OF ALBRECHT'S PATRONS AND FRIENDS IN BONN ALSO TOLD US THAT THE LOWER SAXONY MINISTER-PRESIDENT HAD NOT ENGAGED HIMSELF ENOUGH IN THE CAMPAIGN.

8. ANOTHER DISAPPOINTING CDU PERFORMANCE WAS THAT OF BIEDENKOPF IN THE RUHR. HIS ATTACK ON TRADE UNION ABUSES, JUSTIFIED OR NOT, MANAGED TO MOBILIZE THE SPD TO THE EXTENT THAT WAS THOUGHT UNLIKELY ONLY A FEW WEEKS AGO. THE SHOWING OF THE CDU IN THE RUHR (36.3) NOT ONLY FELL CONSIDERABLY SHORT OF THE 40 PERCENT GOAL BUT WAS WORSE THAN IN THE BUNDESTAG ELECTION OF 1969 AS WELL AS IN THE 1975 LANDTAG ELECTION. BIEDENKOPF, NOW THAT THE ELECTION IS OVER, IS BEING CRITICIZED BY THE LABOR-WING OF THE CDU FOR HIS ALLEGEDLY ANTI-TRADE UNION POSITION. IRONICALLY THE CSU'S "BAYERNKURIER"

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DEFENDED HIM. THAT IS NOT TO SAY THAT BIEDENKOPF SHOULD BE COUNTED OUT AS POSSIBLE FUTURE CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE, BUT HE WILL NOT ENTER THE BUNDESTAG WITH THE "HAUSMACHT" HE HAD HOPED FOR.

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9. HELMUT SCHMIDT MANAGED TO STAVE OFF DEFEAT FOR THE COALITION. HE AND BRANDT MOBILIZED SPD MEMBERS AND SYMPATHIZERS IN THE FINAL WEEKS. DESPITE INNER-PARTY DISPUTES SUCH AS MUNICH AND SCANDALS SUCH AS THE OSSWALD AFFAIR, THE PARTY UNDER SCHMIDT MANAGED TO COME WITHIN ONE TENTH OF ONE PERCENT OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS' PERFORMANCE IN 1969. EXPERTS AGREE THAT HAD BRANDT BEEN THE CANDIDATE INSTEAD OF SCHMIDT THE COALITION WOULD HAVE BEEN DEFEATED.

10. STRAUSS' CRITICISM THAT KOHL DID NOT REACH THE 50 PERCENT MARK IN HIS OWN RHINELAND-PALATINATE ASIDE, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY OTHER UNION CANDIDATE COULD HAVE IMPROVED ON KOHL'S PERFORMANCE. AFTER ALL, IT WAS ONLY ONCE SURPASSED (BY ADENAUER IN 1957). KOHL CARRIED ON AN AGGRESSIVE CAMPAIGN ACROSS THE WIDTH AND BREADTH OF THE COUNTRY AND MANAGED TO ATTRACT A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF THE SO-CALLED SWING VOTE. THE FACT THAT THE CDU/CSU WAS UNABLE TO OBTAIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY HAD LESS TO DO WITH KOHL THAN WITH THE DIFFICULTY OF ANY SINGLE PARTY OBTAINING 50 PERCENT OR MORE IN A FEDERAL ELECTION.

11. THE FDP'S SHOWING IS NOT AS BAD AS IT LOOKED AT FIRST GLANCE. PARTIALLY BECAUSE THE PUBLIC OPINION POLLS -- ALWAYS DOUBTFUL IN MEASURING THE FDP POTENTIAL BECAUSE IT IS STATISTICALLY SO SMALL -- WERE TOO OPTIMISTIC AND PARTIALLY BECAUSE GENSCHER WAS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN THE MOST EFFECTIVE CANDIDATE ON TV, THE LIBERALS EXPECTED TO DO BETTER THAN THEY DID. ACCORDING TO SOME GERMAN POLITICAL SCIENTISTS, THE 7.9 PERCENT WHICH THE LIBERALS RECEIVED REPRESENTS A STABLE BASE OF SUPPORT FOR THE FDP. WHILE THIS MAY BE SOME CONSOLATION FOR GENSCHER, IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW MUCH OF THIS CORE VOTE WOULD DISAPPEAR SHOULD THE LIBERALS LEAVE THE COALITION WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE IT WOULD COST THE FDP AT LEAST ONE-THIRD OF ITS PRESENT SUPPORT AMONG THE VOTERS.

12. CONCLUSION: THE 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTION ONCE AGAIN

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DEMONSTRATED THE DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY WITHOUT A COALITION OF TWO OR MORE PARTIES. THE CONSERVATIVE TREND EVIDENT SINCE 1972 HAS CONTINUED AND IT DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE DIMINISHED. THE UNION PARTIES WERE UNABLE TO DUPLICATE THEIR PERFORMANCES IN RECENT LAENDER ELECTIONS BUT TRADITIONALLY THE PARTY OR PARTIES IN POWER IN BONN TEND TO DO BETTER IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS THAN IN LAENDER ELECTIONS, AND THE OPPOSITION IN BONN CONVERSELY DOES BETTER IN THE LAENDER. BOTH KOHL AND SCHMIDT EMERGED WITH ENHANCED REPUTATIONS ALBEIT WITH A DISLIKE FOR EACH OTHER VERGING ON DISGUST. IN SUM, NORMALCY IN GERMAN ELECTION BEHAVIOR HAS RETURNED.
HILLENBRAND

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